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# COOPERATION BETWEEN THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE LEAGUE OF ARAB STATES

Report of the Secretary-General

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# I. INTRODUCTION

1. In its resolution 48/21 of 22 November 1993, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States", the General Assembly took note with satisfaction of the report of the Secretary-General (A/48/468) and requested the Secretariat of the United Nations and the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States, within their respective fields of competence, to intensify further their cooperation towards the realization of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the strengthening of international peace and security.

2. By the same resolution, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue his efforts to strengthen cooperation and coordination between the United Nations and other organizations and agencies of the United Nations system and the League of Arab States and its specialized organizations in order to enhance their capacity to serve the mutual interests of the two organizations in the political, economic, social, humanitarian, cultural and administrative fields; and to coordinate the follow-up action to facilitate the implementation of the proposals of a multilateral nature adopted at the meeting of representatives of the United Nations system and of the League of Arab States and its specialized organizations held at Tunis in 1983, and to take appropriate action regarding the proposals adopted at previous meetings.

3. The General Assembly decided that, in order to intensify cooperation and for the purpose of review and appraisal of progress, as well as to prepare comprehensive periodic reports, a general meeting between the United Nations system and the League of Arab States should take place once every two years and inter-agency sectoral meetings should be organized annually on areas of priority and wide importance in the development of the Arab States.

4. The Assembly recommended that the next general meeting on cooperation between the representatives of the secretariats of the United Nations system and the League of Arab States and its specialized organizations should be held during 1995. The Assembly requested the Secretary-General of the United Nations, in cooperation with the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, to encourage periodic consultation between representatives of the United Nations Secretariat and the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States to review and strengthen coordination mechanisms with a view to accelerating implementation and follow-up action of multilateral projects, proposals and recommendations adopted at the meetings between the two organizations.

5. The General Assembly further requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Assembly, at its forty-ninth session, a progress report on the implementation of resolution 48/21.

## II. CONSULTATIONS AND EXCHANGES OF INFORMATION

6. On 4 October 1993, the Secretary-General of the United Nations met with the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States at United Nations Headquarters to exchange views on matters of common interest, in particular the promotion of peace and development in the Arab world. They also exchanged their respective reports on the meeting of the two organizations commemorating the tenth anniversary of the first general meeting of cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States, which was held at Geneva in August 1993. The two Secretaries-General had the opportunity to meet again on 12 June 1994, during the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity held at Tunis. On 18 June 1994, Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General and head of the United Nations fact-finding mission to Yemen, met at Cairo with Mr. Ahmed Esmat Abdel Meguid, the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, to discuss the situation in Yemen and further efforts that could be made by the two organizations to resolve the crisis.

7. On 1 August 1994, the Secretary-General convened a high-level meeting in New York with 10 regional arrangements and organizations with which the United Nations has had close cooperation over the last few years. The meeting, the first of its kind, was attended by the Permanent Observer for the League of Arab States to the United Nations on behalf of its Secretary-General and by high-level representatives of nine other regional organizations and arrangements. The participants confirmed the timeliness and significance of the meeting and stressed the need to find ways to explore the potential of Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations for enhancing cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations.

8. During the period under review, the secretariats of the United Nations and the League of Arab States, as well as the Office of the Permanent Observer for the League of Arab States to the United Nations, continued to maintain close contact on matters of mutual concern to the two organizations.

## III. SECTORAL MEETING BETWEEN THE ORGANIZATIONS AND AGENCIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM AND THE LEAGUE OF ARAB STATES ON HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT IN RURAL AREAS

9. In its resolution 48/21 of 22 November 1993, the General Assembly recommended that a joint sectoral meeting be convened between concerned Arab organizations and United Nations agencies on areas of priority and wide importance in the development of the Arab States. To this end, a joint sectoral meeting on human resources development in rural areas was convened at the United Nations Office at Vienna on 14 and 15 July 1994. At a preparatory meeting at the United Nations on 18 May, it was decided that the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations would act as the lead agency for the meeting.

10. Invitations to the meeting were extended to the following agencies and organizations: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), World Health Organization (WHO), World Food

Programme (WFP), World Bank, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Arab Organization for Agricultural Development (AOAD), Arab Centre for the Study of Arid Zones and Dry Lands (ACSAD), Arab Industrial Development and Mining Organization (AIDMO), Arab Labour Organization (ALO), Council for Arab Economic Unity (CAEU), Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALESCO), Arab Monetary Fund (AMF), Arab Bank for the Economic Development of Africa (ABEDA), Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (AFESD), Arab Authority for Agricultural Investment and Development (AAAID) and International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). The meeting was attended by representatives of ESCWA, FAO, UNESCO, WHO, ABEDA, ALO, ACSAD, AOAD, ALESCO and the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States.

11. The main items on the agenda of the meeting were the following:

(a) Annual training programmes designed and implemented by various agencies for all categories of persons working in the countryside, including rural women (technicians, extension workers, instructors) in agriculture, social health, education and other sectors (suggested by ACSAD);

(b) Ways and means currently implemented by the various agencies for the development of human resources at the farm level (farmers, youth and women) (suggested by FAO);

(c) Progress made in the development of curricula at the higher and middle levels, agricultural education to address the rising needs of rural communities, protection of the environment and preservation of natural resources (suggested by FAO);

(d) Current status of the participation of rural people in the design of rural development (suggested by FAO);

(e) Perspectives on rural human development (suggested by AOAD);

(f) Perspectives on coordination and intensification of Arab-international cooperation on rural human resources development (suggested by AOAD);

(g) Strengthening the participation of rural women in the sustainable development of agriculture (suggested by AOAD).

12. The principal objectives of the meeting were the following:

(a) To promote and intensify coordination and cooperation between agencies of the United Nations and the League of Arab States in human resources development in rural areas;

(b) To identify the priorities of programmes of mutual interest to the two parties;

(c) To identify appropriate mechanisms for follow-up and future action

13. Twelve short papers and briefs relating to the topic of the meeting were presented by ACSAD, FAO, AOAD, ESCWA, ALO, the UNESCO Regional Office for Education in the Arab States (UNEDBAS) and the Department of Economic Affairs of the League of Arab States.

14. The meeting's main conclusions and recommendations are set out below.

## A. Suggested programmes and activities for joint inter-agency cooperation

15. In view of the actual needs of rural human resources development in the Arab region, and in response to its requirements, the following programmes were suggested for adoption by both parties - the League of Arab States and the United Nations and their affiliated organizations - to be jointly implemented in support of the endeavours of Arab countries in this regard:

(a) Strengthening the capabilities of the existing national training institutions working in the field of rural development, including:

(i) Improving the training capabilities of the staff working in such institutions;

(ii) Enhancing the local training institutions by furnishing them with needed audiovisual equipment and computer facilities;

(iii) Supporting the local training institutions with training materials;

(b) Enhancing the capabilities of those non-governmental organizations which were likely to play an important role in rural development by providing training to their staff and involving them in the implementation of rural development activities;

(c) Designing and implementing several joint projects, such as:

(i) Enhancing the role of women in the rural development process;

(ii) Promoting the participation and contribution of youth in the rural development process;

(iii) Developing rural industries through utilization of agricultural residues and processing of agricultural products;

(iv) Improving nutrition and diet in rural areas;

(v) Improving the database for rural human resources;

(vi) Promoting and developing the cooperative movement in rural areas;

(vii) Developing vocational professional safety for agricultural workers;

(viii) Promoting legal protection for agricultural labour;

(d) Giving priority to the formulation of projects, to studies and to the organizing of meetings to strengthen and develop:

(i) The agricultural extension system through continuous training of personnel, restructuring of its administration to ensure linkages with research and other institutions concerned with agricultural and rural development, modification of its current approaches, the setting of clear policies and the allocation of more resources;

(ii) The curricula and teaching methodologies of the higher and middle-level agricultural education institutions to address the current needs of rural societies;

(iii) The establishment of self-help rural organizations through training of rural people, people/farmer participation programmes/projects;

(iv) Effective monitoring and evaluation systems on the participation of people and on extension services.

## B. Suggested mechanisms for coordination and intensification of cooperation between League of Arab States and United Nations organizations in rural human resources development

16. It was agreed that the present Near East Inter-Agency Task Force on Human Resources Development, including Gender, would be the appropriate mechanism to follow up the recommendations of the meeting. FAO would remain the lead agency for the Task Force, and its secretariat would be at the FAO Regional Office for the Near East, in Cairo. Each participating agency should be requested to designate a focal point in order to ensure its active participation in the Task Force and all other follow-up activities.

17. Upon invitation for the next meeting, the Task Force Coordinator will send invitations to non-member agencies to seek their interest for joining the Task Force.

18. The follow-up will be as follows:

(a) The Task Force will distribute the list of activities which were recommended at the meeting to its member organizations for them to prepare preliminary project documents;

(b) A subcommittee for each programme or activity will be set up by Task Force members. Invitations will be extended to non-member agencies, as appropriate, to review the project documents;

(c) The organization responsible for each proposed project will contact the concerned country to obtain its approval of the project document;

(d) The Task Force will hold meetings for donors and interested financial institutions to promote the proposed projects;

(e) The Task Force will discuss means of cooperation for the implementation of the proposed projects.

### C. Future meetings on human resources development in rural areas

19. The second sectoral meeting on human resources development in rural areas will be held in conjunction with the United Nations/League of Arab States general meeting to be convened in 1995.

## IV. FOLLOW-UP ACTION ON PROPOSALS AGREED TO AT PREVIOUS MEETINGS

20. It may be recalled that the joint meeting between the United Nations system and the League of Arab States held at Geneva in July 1990 decided to establish the following six sectoral areas of cooperation between the two organizations: international peace and security; food and agriculture; labour, trade, industry and environment; social affairs; education, science, culture and information; and communications.

21. A summary of the reports of the organizations and agencies of the United Nations system on their cooperation with the League of Arab States during the period under review is given below. The summary includes activities in the sectoral areas, as well as follow-up action on proposals adopted at the previous meetings at Tunis in 1983 (A/38/299 and Corr.1), at Amman in 1985 (A/40/481/Add.1), and at Geneva in 1988 and 1990 (A/43/509/Add.1 and A/45/481/Add.1).

### A. Department for Development Support and Management Services

22. The Department for Development Support and Management Services of the United Nations Secretariat is executing a technical assistance project entitled "Administrative development for the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States". The purpose of the project is to enhance the administrative capabilities of the League of Arab States so that it will act as a catalyst for regional development in support of the implementation of its economic and social programmes. The project is expected to be completed by December 1994. By then, it would have achieved its objectives by establishing and operating a well-designed and effective computerized communication system which will serve all organizational entities of the General Secretariat.

23. The thirteenth biennial meeting of national recruitment services, organized by the Department in close cooperation with the Government of Egypt, was held at Cairo from 29 March to 2 April 1993. The League of Arab States took part in the deliberations of this important meeting, which focused on the ongoing transformations in the economic and social sectors of the United Nations Secretariat and the new configuration of technical cooperation programmes and projects. The meeting unanimously adopted the Cairo Plan of Action. The representatives of the Government of Tunisia and the League of Arab States

jointly extended an invitation to the Department to hold a similar workshop, in 1994, for member States of the League.

## B. Department of Public Information

24. In carrying out its mandated programmes, the Department of Public Information of the United Nations Secretariat undertakes information activities and services in cooperation with the League of Arab States and its specialized organizations. Cooperation is undertaken at the official and working levels both at United Nations Headquarters in New York and the League's headquarters in Cairo and Tunis, as well as in the League's member States hosting and serviced by United Nations Information Centres. Activities include jointly organized seminars held in the region, missions of journalists to the Middle East, briefings at United Nations Headquarters for teams representing Arab unions of journalists and broadcasters, and dissemination in the Middle East region of print broadcasters and of print and audiovisual products of the Department of Public Information in Arabic, English and French.

## C. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

25. Cooperation between the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the League of Arab States has continued to develop in areas relating to refugees and global humanitarian problems of common concern.

26. Regular contacts were maintained between the two organizations aimed at identifying further concrete collaborative activities and mechanisms for future cooperation. Particular emphasis was placed on the following priorities:

(a) Conclusion of the Cooperation Agreement between UNHCR and the League of Arab States;

(b) Finalization of the Arab Convention/Declaration on Refugees;

(c) Organization of a regional seminar for non-governmental organizations on refugees and asylum-seekers;

(d) Follow-up on previous discussions with the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization to identify areas of cooperation in the field of educational assistance to refugees; and

(e) Strengthening of UNHCR cooperation with other specialized organizations of the League of Arab States in areas of common interest.

27. In the field of promotion and dissemination of refugee law and basic principles of international protection, UNHCR and the League of Arab States are exploring new opportunities jointly to carry out studies and organize conferences and seminars on the specific situation of refugees, asylum-seekers and displaced persons in the Arab world.

## D. United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

28. During the period under review, cooperation between the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the League of Arab States and its specialized organizations was further strengthened with regard to the intersectoral project, initiated by the UNCTAD secretariat, on prospects for the sustained development of the Palestinian economy in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Research on the first part of the project, which examines economic and social development in the West Bank and Gaza Strip since 1967, has been completed. Over 20 in-depth studies are being prepared covering all economic and social sectors of those areas. The second and third parts of the project, covering the main economic sectors and including studies dealing with future prospects, strategies and policy options, was to be consolidated during 1994. Based on the findings of the first part, and bearing in mind the immediate needs of the emerging Palestinian economy, increased efforts will be focused during 1994-1995 on rendering technical assistance in areas where UNCTAD has developed capacities in operational activities. Once the secretariat's proposals have been fully developed, consultations will be sought with the League of Arab States and its relevant specialized organizations, including the Arab Industrial Development and Mining Organization, with the concurrence of the Palestinian authorities. The consultations will examine both the substance of activities to be undertaken by the UNCTAD secretariat and the financial requirements of the programme, as well as the modalities of possible cooperation with interested organizations.

29. In 1993, the secretariat of the League of Arab States invited the UNCTAD secretariat to participate in the first Afro-Arab trade fair, which was held at Tunis from 22 to 31 October. The UNCTAD secretariat contributed actively to the event by providing documentation and organizing seminars and business consultations for the benefit of the participants.

30. The UNCTAD secretariat, in cooperation with UNDP and the League of Arab States, is now involved in formulating a comprehensive technical assistance programme aimed at expanded intra-Arab trade. The programme will include organizing a round-table meeting on the implications for Arab countries of the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations, finalizing the Inter-Arab Trade Information Network, which was set up within the Arab Trade Financing Programme, and the adaptation and translation into Arabic of software for the Automated System for Customs Data, as well as the UNCTAD programme designed to strengthen capacities in developing countries for the development of human resources in the field of foreign trade.

## E. Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

31. During the period under review, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia continued to harmonize and promote activities with the League of Arab States. Areas of cooperation included environment, human settlements, population, social development, trade, transport and water resources.

32. In April 1993, in the context of ESCWA resolution 180 (XVI), which supported the establishment of an Arab and international inter-agency

coordinating committee on environment in the Arab region for the purpose of promoting environmentally sound and sustainable development, ESCWA, in cooperation with the League of Arab States and with other United Nations agencies in the Arab region, established the Joint Committee on Environment and Development in the Arab Region.

33. The Joint Committee is planning to establish an environmental database, including related activities of environmental statistics and indicators, and to convene in 1995 a joint ministerial conference on environment and agriculture in the Arab region.

34. In the area of human settlements, consultations were held with the technical secretariat of the Arab Council of Ministers of Housing and Construction, in cooperation with the League of Arab States. Agreement was reached to cooperate in preparations for the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), to be held at Istanbul in June 1996. In addition, a joint newsletter on human settlements in the Arab world will be issued periodically, in collaboration with Habitat.

35. In the field of population, ESCWA's population subprogramme cooperated with the League of Arab States in organizing the Arab Population Conference, held at Amman from 4 to 8 April 1993. The Conference adopted the Second Amman Declaration on Population and Development, which reflected the position of all the Arab countries and was submitted to the International Conference on Population and Development, held at Cairo from 5 to 13 September 1994.

36. The population subprogramme, also in coordination with the League of Arab States, organized an expert group meeting on human development that was held at Cairo from 6 to 9 December 1993.

37. In preparation for the World Summit for Social Development to be held in 1995, ESCWA, in cooperation with the League of Arab States and other Arab organizations, was preparing the Arab position papers on the main themes of poverty, productive employment, social integration and culture. The papers will reflect, after endorsement by the Arab ministers, the unified Arab Declaration on Social Development to be submitted to the World Summit.

38. In the field of trade, ESCWA participated as an observer in the meeting of the Arab League's Committee on Coordination of Trade Information, held at Cairo on 1 September 1993. It also participated in the first Afro-Arab trade fair, held at Tunis from 22 to 31 October 1993 and jointly organized by the League of Arab States and the Organization of African Unity, at which it presented a paper on Trade relations between the ESCWA region and African countries.

39. With regard to transport, ESCWA is participating with the secretariat of the League of Arab States in the Land Transport Committee, developing a plan to improve transport corridors in the Arab region.

40. In the area of water resources, contacts have been made with the secretariat of the League of Arab States to promote close cooperation for the establishment of a regional water resources council and a regional water

training network and to explore the possibility of convening, within a regional perspective, a conference on water resources in the Occupied Arab Territories.

## F. Economic Commission for Africa

41. The Pan-African Development Information System (PADIS) of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) cooperates with the League of Arab States in the field of information technology, including the Arabization of software, and has close relations with the Arab League Documentation and Information Centre (ALDOC). In collaboration with ALDOC, PADIS developed the North African Development Information System and the Arab Regional Information System Network. PADIS and ALDOC have also organized joint training programmes and have trained nine nationals from North Africa.

42. PADIS also interacts with specialized organizations of the League of Arab States such as the Arab Organization for Standardization and Metrology, the Arab Industrial Development and Mining Organization, the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization, the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development and the Arab Federation for Libraries and Information.

43. At the invitation of the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States, ECA presented a technical paper on conservation and rational use of water resources in six North African countries at a technical workshop on ground water technology organized by the League at Cairo from 22 to 24 December 1993. ECA's paper presented a comprehensive assessment of both surface and ground water potentials and current and future demands, and included recommendations for conservation measures and future conjunctive uses of surface and group water in countries of North Africa.

44. The Joint Committee on Environment and Development in the Arab Region, established in 1993, was endorsed by the Arab Council of Ministers of Environmental Affairs of the League of Arab States at its fifth session held at Cairo. The Council of Ministers also decided to convene in November 1994 a Pan-Arab ministerial conference on sustainable agricultural and rural development. The activities and work plan of the conference will be undertaken in two steps: expert consultation to consider the technical issues, and the ministerial conference to look into policy issues.

45. The conference will identify priority areas for action and define methodologies for the implementation of the strategy adopted by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development for sustainable agricultural and rural development and the Arab programmes of action on sustainable development, which will assist Governments in reviewing their agricultural policies in relation to protection of the environment, the adoption of indicative action programmes and the promotion of coordination and cooperation at national and regional levels.

46. ECA participated, as a collaborating agency, in the first Afro-Arab trade fair, held at Tunis from 22 to 31 October 1993. The main organizers of the fair were the secretariats of the Organization of African Unity and the League of Arab States.

## G. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

47. Efforts continue to be made to increase cooperation between the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO), one of the specialized organizations of the League of Arab States. UNESCO will contribute to the purchase of equipment and the modernization and implementation of the ALECSO computerization plan. The competent services of UNESCO have undertaken a study concerning the programme, outlining ALECSO's communication requirements and the development of information exchanges by linking ALECSO with international computer networks.

48. UNESCO also provided financial support to ALECSO for the organization in Kuwait, in March 1994, of a forum of reflection on the Arab world on the threshold of the twenty-first century.

49. ALECSO participated actively with UNESCO in the preparation of the Conference of Ministers of Education and Those Responsible for Economic Planning in the Arab States held at Cairo from 11 to 14 June 1994. UNESCO is also ready to launch UNESCO/ALECSO chairs and a network in the Arab region.

50. A number of activities were also implemented in 1993 by UNESCO's Regional Office of Education, with the active cooperation of ALECSO and the Arab Literacy and Adult Education Organization, notably regional seminars and expert meetings related to women's literacy, adult education and the programme entitled "Universalization and renewal of primary education and eradication of adult illiteracy in the Arab States by the year 2000" (ARABUPEAL). ALECSO was also involved in the preparatory work for the fifth Conference of Ministers of Education and Those Responsible for Economic Planning in Arab States and the second session of the Advisory Committee of ARABUPEAL, held at Cairo from 11 to 14 June 1994.

51. In the sphere of culture, cooperation between UNESCO and the League of Arab States is being developed mainly with ALECSO, which recently received a financial contribution of US$ 20,000 under the Participation Programme (1992-1993) for an expert mission to prepare a regional strategy for the development of crafts.

52. UNESCO continues to cooperate with ALECSO in the implementation of activities relating to the preservation of the cultural heritage and the follow-up to the international safeguarding campaigns, notably those for Sana'a and Shibam in Yemen. Cooperation also continues in the context of the Plan for the Development of Arab Culture (Arabia Plan). The close cooperation established between the Arab League Documentation and Information Centre and UNESCO continued in the 1992-1993 biennium.

## H. United Nations Population Fund

53. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the League of Arab States have enjoyed an excellent working partnership since the mid-1970s. UNFPA provided assistance to the League of Arab States in creating the Population Research Unit (PRU), which is responsible for undertaking population and population-related research for advocacy and policy matters. Through the years, PRU has fulfilled an important role in sensitizing ministerial councils of health and of social affairs on population matters. With UNFPA support, PRU is implementing a major regional project aimed at strengthening its technical capability in the field of data analysis and operational research.

54. Another joint project is the Pan-Arab maternal and child health survey conducted within the frame of the Pan-Arab Project for Child Development. This major project, which is receiving joint funding from the League of Arab States, the Arab Gulf Programme for United Nations Development Organizations, UNFPA, WHO, UNICEF, the International Planned Parenthood Federation, the World Bank and the United Nations, aims at assisting 14 non-oil-producing Arab countries to undertake a comprehensive demographic, socio-economic and health survey to establish the levels and trends of reproductive and child-health indicators, including infant and child mortality, maternal mortality, contraceptive prevalence and quality of prenatal and postnatal care. On the basis of the findings of these surveys and analysis of the data, the determinants of the various indicators would be understood and effective policies and programmes to improve the conditions of children and women would be established at country and regional levels.

## I. International Labour Organization

55. The International Labour Organization (ILO) participated actively in the commemoration, in August 1993, of the tenth anniversary of cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States and provided a substantive working paper reflecting ILO's experience in its cooperation with the League of Arab States, as well as future prospects.

56. During the general meeting for the commemoration, ILO worked closely with the Arab Labour Organization (ALO) to formulate a joint programme for cooperation between ILO, ALO and the League of Arab States with respect to a number of issues in ILO's fields of competence. The programme, which was incorporated in the final report, addresses, in particular, issues related to human resources development, women, welfare of children, migration and social protection.

57. Within the framework of the ILO/ALO joint programme agreed upon at the beginning of 1992, three regional seminars, covering employment, training and labour standards, were held in 1993, and a programme of joint activities for execution in the biennium 1994-1995 was formulated by the two organizations. The ILO was represented at all sessions of the ALO Governing Body and the Arab Labour Conference.

58. The Secretary-General of the League of Arab States visited ILO on the occasion of the International Labour Conference in June 1993, at the invitation of the Director-General of the International Labour Organization, who, in turn, visited the headquarters of the League of Arab States in Cairo in April 1994. The visits provided opportunities for an exchange of ideas and views on ways and means of expanding and consolidating cooperation between the two organizations.

59. As in past year, ILO's mission on the situation of workers in Palestine and the Occupied Arab Territories held consultations with the League of Arab States and ALO in preparation for the Director-General's report to the 1993 International Labour Conference on the subject. The ILO has also maintained close contacts with the Arab League Documentation Centre. In collaboration with the League of Arab States and ESCWA, the ILO has initiated three studies, covering employment, poverty alleviation and social integration, for submission to the Arab Preparatory Committee for the World Summit for Social Development, to be held in 1995.

## J. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

60. The Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO) continued to cooperate with the League of Arab States and its specialized organizations in areas of mutual concern, and undertook activities for the development of the agricultural sector in the member countries of the League. During the year, FAO prepared a number of technical studies of relevance to the League's work and participated in a number of regional meetings and workshops.

61. In particular, FAO and the Economic Affairs Department of the League of Arab States, together with other multilateral and regional organizations, collaborated actively in the work of the recently created Joint Committee on Environment and Development in the Arab Region (JCEDAR). FAO is participating in its technical secretariat. Intensive preparatory work has been under way since 1993 to organize jointly two important ministerial conferences, one on the Management and sustainable development of dry lands in the Arab world and the other on Sustainable agriculture and rural development in the Arab world. Preliminary contacts between FAO and the Economic Affairs Department were also made in December 1993 to plan for jointly organizing a conference on Arab fisheries investments and trade, to be held in late 1994 or early 1995.

62. FAO also continued to provide technical support to various development programmes of the specialized organizations of the League of Arab States in the areas of FAO's mandate and competence, especially with regard to combating desertification in the Arab world and to fisheries development. FAO continued to exchange technical information and reports related to agricultural and rural development in the Arab countries with the Economic Affairs Department and the specialized organizations of the League of Arab States. Exchange of information on various subjects related to agriculture and rural development continued to be strengthened at the regional level between FAO and the League's specialized organizations within the framework of the seven inter-agency task forces: on crop production; livestock development and health; human resources development; biotechnology; environment and sustainable development, with relation to the work of JCEDAR; water resources development; and food and nutrition.

## K. United Nations Industrial Development Organization

63. A relationship agreement to strengthen industrial cooperation was signed by the Director-General of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States at Vienna on 15 June 1994.

64. Areas of cooperation envisaged in the agreement include development and transfer of technology, regional development and localization of industries, forecasting of trends in industrial production in the Arab region, industrial policies and strategies, direct technical assistance to industry, management of industrial surveys and training of industrial manpower.

65. The agreement provides for the League of Arab States to attend sessions of UNIDO's General Conference and Industrial Development Board, while UNIDO can take part in meetings of the League concerned with matters of interest to the organization. Exchange of information is also called for in the agreement.

66. With a view to enhancing their long-standing cooperation, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, the Arab Industrial Development and Mining Organization and UNIDO agreed on 18 February 1994 that the following priority areas adopted on 9 December 1993 by the fifth session of the General Conference of UNIDO in its resolution GC.5/Res.13, entitled "Special programme for industrial development in the Arab countries", should constitute the basic framework for joint activities which would take into account the strengthening of regional industrial cooperation and the needs of the least developed Arab countries: development of human resources; development of national and regional technological capacities; upgrading of the competitiveness of industrial products; standardization and quality control; industrial management information; food security through the development of agro-industries; promotion of the private sector, industrial rehabilitation and investment activities; and sustainable industrial development through energy conservation and environment protection.

67. The proposed modalities of cooperation among the three organizations would include: systematic exchange of visits, in particular at the technical level; planning of joint activities; timely exchange of information on the work programmes of the three organizations, and joint efforts for mobilization of resources for industrial development of the region.

68. It was agreed to examine further the coordination frameworks, including a review of existing agreements, in order to strengthen cooperation among the three organizations.

## L. International Maritime Organization

69. Every effort continues to be made to maintain close cooperation and consultation between the International Monetary Organization (IMO) and the League of Arab States in matters of common interest in the field of maritime transport and the development and use of shipping in international trade, as well as the prevention of pollution. IMO is currently striving to strengthen

its technical assistance programme through an enhanced regional presence, and it is hoped that this will lead to closer links between IMO and the League of Arab States for the benefit of the member States of both organizations.

## M. World Intellectual Property Organization

70. In the field of industrial property, the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) executed several UNDP-financed regional projects aimed at strengthening the basis of the technological development of the Arab countries through the enforcement of the industrial property system and the promotion of its effective use. In cooperation with Governments, WIPO has also organized training courses, regional and national seminars, and other meetings in the Arab region. Expert missions visited the region on a regular basis and WIPO advised several Arab countries in revising and updating their industrial-property legislation. In the field of copyright, WIPO has cooperated with the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization and the Governments of the region through the organization of seminars, training courses and expert meetings.

## N. World Meteorological Organization

71. The close collaboration of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) with the League of Arab States is reflected in its participation, at the League's invitation, in the tenth session of the Permanent Meteorology Technical Committee of the League of Arab States, held in early January 1994. WMO is continuing to assist the Committee in achieving its goals through the implementation of its development programme, which is also of interest to WMO. In addition, WMO is continuing to implement technical assistance projects in a number of Arab States funded through UNDP, the Global Environment Facility and trust fund arrangements.

## O. International Telecommunication Union

72. With regard to the Modern Arab Telecommunication Development (MODARABTEL) project, the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) has kept the Technical Secretariat of the League of Arab States informed of the activities and results of the project networks. The activities of the project networks are permanent items on the agenda of the related subcommittees of the League of Arab States. It is expected that the Technical Secretariat will be able to play a positive role in promoting the realization of the MODARABTEL Phase II Regional Project among the Arab countries of the region.

73. Reciprocal consultations and exchange of information have also taken place between ITU and the League of Arab States, and they have organized joint regional seminars and training courses. The League's Technical Secretariat is in the process of organizing a regional seminar on new services, research and manufacture of telecommunication equipment. ITU is offering support and assistance in the organization of this event, as well as providing lecturers and

fellowships. The ITU plan of training courses and workshops for 1993 (seven activities) and 1994 (ten activities) was sent to the Technical Secretariat which adopted it as a joint plan of activities for the Arab region. ITU and the Technical Secretariat also extended invitations to one another to attend a large number of meetings over the course of the period under review.

74. As the ITU regional office and the League of Arab States are both located in Cairo, coordination is a continuous process, whether by telephone or during visits. A coordination meeting was due to be organized in the near future. Focal points for organizational coordination have also been designated.

## P. International Civil Aviation Organization

75. The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) has maintained close liaison with the League of Arab States on matters relating to civil aviation, particularly through the ICAO Middle East Office in Cairo, and will be pleased to enhance its cooperation in order to ensure the safe and orderly development of international civil aviation in the region.

76. ICAO participated in the general meeting on cooperation between the United Nations system and the League of Arab States, held at Geneva from 26 to 31 August 1993, which, in the air transport field, agreed to encourage cooperation in a number of areas, including training of civil aviation personnel, development of regional technical cooperation projects and implementation of air navigation facilities and services. The League of Arab States has also been invited to relevant ICAO meetings.

## Q. International Fund for Agricultural Development

77. A cooperation agreement between the League of Arab States and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) was signed at Cairo in June 1993. The agreement will enhance the achievement of the common goals and objectives of the two organizations and further consolidate the already excellent relationship between them.

78. IFAD has also been providing financial support to regional organizations of the League of Arab States established to serve the region in the fields of agricultural research and training, and has developed strong links with Arab financial institutions which operate under the umbrella of the League, such as the Arab Fund for Economic And Social Development, the Arab Monetary Fund, and the Arab Bank for the Economic Development of Africa, all of which either co-finance IFAD projects in the region or assist in the implementation of IFAD operations and activities.

## R. World Food Programme

79. Cooperation between member countries of the League of Arab States and the World Food Programme (WFP) is long-standing. During the past 30 years, WFP's cumulative operations in member countries of the League of Arab States have amounted to approximately US$ 2.8 billion. WFP's current commitments to 36 ongoing development projects in 13 member countries of the League of Arab States amount to $479 million. In addition, WFP provided relief assistance to displaced persons in a number of member States of the League, including Somalia, the Sudan, Iraq, Algeria, Djibouti, Mauritania and Yemen.

## S. United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat)

80. The close cooperation that has existed between the League of Arab States and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) for many years was strengthened by the signing of a memorandum of understanding in 1987, aimed at achieving greater coordination between the two organizations.

81. Since 1986, several workshops, seminars and conferences have been organized jointly by the League of Arab States and UNCHS (Habitat) covering aspects of human settlements. Regular bilateral coordination meetings between the League of Arab States and UNCHS (Habitat), as well as multilateral meetings between the League and the United Nations system in which UNCHS (Habitat) has taken an active role, have also been held. There was a temporary suspension of the bilateral meetings following the decision to transfer the headquarters of the League of Arab States from Tunis back to Cairo, but it was intended that the meetings would be resumed in the near future.

## T. United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

82. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) regards its relationship with the League of Arab States as extremely valuable. Thus, regular consultations and contacts continue at various levels between UNRWA officials and the secretariat of the League of Arab States. Recent exchanges of visits by senior officials from the League secretariat and UNRWA have included the visit made by the Commissioner-General of United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, on 18 April 1993, to the secretariat in Cairo, where he was invited to address the meeting of the Ministerial Council of the League of Arab States.

83. The Secretary-General of the League of Arab States and the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East agreed that more direct contacts should take place aimed at enhancing and further strengthening the excellent cooperation that exists. The Commissioner-General and other UNRWA officials also maintain regular contact with the Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States in Vienna and New York. The Agency's office in Cairo maintains contact with the League's secretariat.

84. UNRWA participates in the sectoral meetings organized by the League of Arab States and regularly attends the annual meeting of the Education Council which reviews education services offered to Palestine refugees in the host countries. Arab States have contributed generously to UNRWA's special assistance programmes in Gaza and the West Bank. The League of Arab States has continued its strong support of UNRWA programmes and is making every effort to urge its member States to increase their contributions to UNRWA's regular budget.

## U. International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women

85. The International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women cooperated with member countries of the League of Arab States by holding a successful training activity in Morocco in December 1993 and by recently approaching its approved focal point in Tunisia on the possibility of holding an expert-group meeting in the second half of 1994 to draw up guidelines for the elaboration of gender training materials responsive to the needs of Arab women.

## V. International Atomic Energy Agency

86. As reported on previous occasions, the League of Arab States has consultative status with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and is therefore invited regularly to its general conference. Since 1987, the League of Arab States has also been invited as an observer to meetings of the Agency's Technical Assistance and Cooperation Committee. IAEA's cooperation with the League of Arab States Mission in Vienna is being intensified.

## W. General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade

87. Cooperation between the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and the League of Arab States has continued as in previous years. GATT has continued to provide technical assistance to member States of the League of Arab States, as appropriate, in the context of normal GATT activities and/or the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations. GATT has also been providing opportunities for training facilities in its trade policy courses to officials of member States of the League of Arab States.

## X. International Monetary Fund

88. The cooperation of the International Monetary Fund with the members of the League of Arab States covers a wide spectrum of areas, including financial assistance in support of adjustment and reform efforts, reviews of recent economic developments, dialogues on policy formulation and implementation, and provision of technical assistance. In addition, the Fund has continued to play an important role in the provision of financial support to Arab League members facing balance-of-payments difficulties.

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